

A SURVEY OF TEENAGE PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

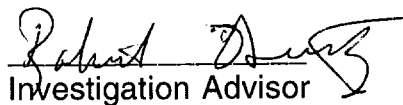
by

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ABSTRACT

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A Survey of Teenage Perception of Parental Influence on Alcohol Consumption			
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The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe the level of parental influence in teenage non-drinkers reported by high school teenagers in a rural high school consisting of approximately 400 students. Statistics of teenage drinking continue to grow with each generation. Teenagers have role models and literature shows that most often their role models are their parents. Alcohol is misused by teenagers more than any other age group. This study focused on the role that parents play in that misuse. Parents often send mixed messages by telling their children the harms of alcohol use, but then consume alcohol themselves. Often times parents supply alcohol for their teenagers for the reason that they feel their teenagers will drink anyway. This study focused on the level of parental influence on those teenagers that choose not to cower to peer pressure and avoid alcohol use.

This study focused on the following objectives:

1. To determine the current level of parental influence in teenagers that choose not to consume alcohol.
2. To determine the level of influence of mixed messages experienced by teenagers about consumption of alcohol.
3. To determine the current level of other factors that influence teenagers not to consume alcohol.

A self-created survey called Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was used to gather information from high school teenagers to determine what parental factors, if any, play a role in their decision to not consume alcohol. All of 84 seniors of the class of 2000 enrolled at the Cumberland High School program in the Cumberland School District located in Cumberland, Wisconsin were identified as the sample for this study. Cumberland School District is a small district located in northwestern Wisconsin with approximately 1200 students K-12. The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was handed out during the school day and collected immediately after completion.

The results of the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey showed a large percentage think their parents are influential in their decision making. In addition, the survey showed that parents are sending mixed messages to their children about consuming alcohol. Some parents send mixed messages by using the old adage, "Do as I say and not as I do", while others tell their children they do not want them to drink, but will come help them out in the chance that their children do get intoxicated. Finally, other factors, such as peers, school and media play a role in influencing teenagers and alcohol, but only a small percentage.

Parents are playing an influential role in the lives of their children. Some

parents are positive role models while others are sadly negative role models.

The original hypothesis of this study was that the reason teenagers make the decision to not consume alcohol is caused by the influence from their parent(s)/guardian(s) that are positive role models and abstain from drinking alcohol. This is only somewhat true and sometimes results in just the opposite. If parents choose to be submissive when it comes to their teens and drinking alcohol, the chances increase that their teens will at one time, or more often, be involved with this governed drug. On the other hand, if parents persist in being positive role models by drinking moderately, or never at all, their teens have a greater chance of lessening their involvement with alcohol.

Acknowledgments

For the past two years I have been introduced to a realm of people striving for the same goal of achieving a degree in Guidance and Counseling. There have been so many people that have helped me get to the final stages of my degree by influencing my thoughts, assisting in group projects, giving advice to keep me focused, and being my friend.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Alcohol consumption by teenagers is a nationwide epidemic. Teenagers are starting to consume alcohol at earlier ages.

A 1997 national study of teenage students revealed 54 percent of eighth-graders, 72 percent of 10th-graders and 82 percent of 12th-graders had consumed alcohol, and more than a third of 12th-graders had been drunk at least once. (Brody, 1999, 2D)

These statistics should not be all that astonishing when considering that society accepts alcohol as part of daily events. Alcohol is a depressant drug. Drugs are referred to as “controlled substances” and prescribing and dispensing are strictly governed. According to the Encyclopedia of Alcoholism, alcohol is said to be a “controlled substance”, but actually the proper identification is “regulated” by governing laws. (1991, p. 78,) Alcohol is often confused as a stimulant, but the reality of the drug is that it works as a depressant. Alcohol gets into the bloodstream, and the amount depends on how much alcohol is drunk, how fast it is drunk, and the person's body weight. The effects cause body functions to slow or become depressed as the amount of alcohol is increased. (Globe Health, 1987) Alcohol works on the physical system like a drug. A tolerance for alcohol can be developed which will mean that it will take more of the drug to produce similar effects. Withdrawal symptoms can occur if an individual suddenly stops drinking. (Globe Health, 1987) Even though alcohol is not considered a “hard drug” it does cause similar physical and mental harm comparable to “hard drugs”. Abusing alcohol is not accepted by society, but casual drinking is widely accepted. Alcohol has become a part of daily lives of the majority of society. A glass of wine with dinner, a beer at the ballpark, a brandy after a stressful

day, a champagne toast at a wedding; alcohol is embedded into society. How do parents protect their children from the ill effects of this drug if society overlooks its danger?

The statistics of teenage drinking continue to grow with each generation.

More than one-third of high school seniors see no great risk in consuming four to five drinks a day. Yet 16 percent of teenagers have had "blackouts" where heavy drinking erased their memories of what happened the previous evening. And alcohol is the single biggest factor behind the leading cause of death among teenagers--traffic fatalities. (Brody, 1999, 2D).

Even though alcohol consumption is the cause of many teenage problems, there are high school students that will not indulge in consuming alcoholic beverages. These students may or may not attend parties where alcohol is being consumed; however, these students refuse to participate. There are many preventive programs available to high school aged students, but have not been the driving force behind students who keep from drinking. Preventive programs such as MADD, SADD, Arrive Alive and others have short term affects on high school students. Teenagers forget the messages as they plan to attend the next weekend party. The major factor that influences teenagers to abstain from consuming alcohol come from their parents. According to a national poll conducted by the Hazelden Foundation, "parents are not giving their adolescent children a strict no-use message on alcohol." ("Parent Survey," 1998) The results of this survey showed that many parents are aware that their teenagers will be drinking and they talk to them about the consequences of drinking and driving. This is not enough as there are additional consequences involved with

drinking, such as unsafe sexual behavior. Students need role models, and parents are confusing the issue of drinking with the old adage, "Do as I say and not as I do". Children see their parents using alcohol as a stress releaser or for having a good time. The result is confusion when it comes to parents lecturing their teens on drinking. Teenagers need to hear that drinking is not acceptable behavior. However, teenagers receive the wrong message to "not drink and drive" instead of being safe and sober. This study intends to focus on the current level of parental influence in teenagers that choose not to consume alcohol.

Statement of the Problem

A review of the literature shows that teenagers and alcohol is a dangerous and unhealthy mix. Alcohol related traffic fatalities is the number one source of death for people ages 16 to 24 years old. (Van Hecke, 1995) Studies have also shown that "meaningful change in teenagers attitudes towards alcohol will only happen if parents insist upon zero tolerance. (Van Hecke, 1995) However, most teenagers receive mixed messages from parents because "We're very comfortable with alcohol in the U.S., that it's not a problem." ("Parent Survey," 1998) The purpose of this study was to describe the level of parental influence in teenage non-drinkers reported by high school teenagers. This study focused on the following three objectives to identify the level of parental influence on teenagers who choose to not consume alcohol.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the current level of parental influence in teenagers who choose not to consume alcohol.

2. To determine the mixed messages received by teenagers about consumption of alcohol.
3. To determine the current level of other factors that influence teenagers not to consume alcohol.

Chapter II

Literature Review

In review of the literature in the area of teenage alcohol consumption, teenagers and parents have different views about the subject, parents play an important influential role in their childrens' decision making, teenagers often receive mixed messages about alcohol consumption, and parental strategies have proven effective.

Teenagers and Parents Have Different Views About Alcohol

In order to approach the problem of teenage drinking, parents need to understand the motives behind their teenager's urge to consume alcohol and that they play an important influential role in their childrens' lives.

The majority of parents strongly believe that it is peer pressure that leads teenagers to drink. Parents have the tendency to underestimate the influence of alcohol on their children. Teenagers do not believe that peer pressure is the motive behind alcohol consumption. Up to 79 percent of teenagers say they drink because they enjoy "the feeling of being drunk and the chance to escape from their problems." ("Parents, Children," 1995) Executive directory of Hazelden Foundation in New York, Renee Zito, claims that young people who begin drinking begin to associate alcohol use with having a good time. ("Parent Survey," 1998) Unlike their parents, teenagers are more likely to consider alcohol a bigger problem then illegal drugs. ("Parents, Children," 1995)

Parents Play an Important Influential Role in Teen Decision Making

In addition to having different views on why teenagers drink, parents need to realize that, whether they like it or not, their children see them as influential role models. A large population of children see their parents as role models. In one poll it was discovered that 47 percent of children ages 13-17 considered either their mother

or father as their “best role model”. (Adato, 1999) In another survey 61 percent of teenagers said that their parents contributed the most influence on their decision to drink alcohol or not. (Dolliver, 1998) Parent’s attitudes toward alcohol influences their offspring, often times giving mixed messages. This will be discussed further on in this study.

Researchers have known that parents play a critical role in their teens’ decision-making, but are parents the only influence? Some studies have shown that involvement in school and extra-curricular activities can also be the cause of deterring teens from drinking alcohol. According to a study by J. Kelly Coker, a Ph. D. candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, “Parents, peers and involvement in school and community activities are among the strongest influences in helping teenagers avoid problem drinking.” (“Steering Teens, 1998) Other studies have questioned genetic makeup as being the influential force.

A study by Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Bonnie L. Barber found that involvement in “prosocial activities”, such as belonging to church groups, or performing art groups, was linked to low rate involvement in risky behavior such as consuming alcohol. However, the study found that the low interest in consuming alcohol did not apply to those involved in team sports, school-related and school spirit-related organizations. Eccles and Barber discovered that participation in team sports and other school activities “was linked to positive educational trajectories, and to high rates of involvement in one type of risky behavior: drinking alcohol.” (Eccles, 1999) This study clearly dissolves the possibility that extra-curricular involvement could be a stronger influencing force than the parental role model.

Many studies have attempted to prove that behavior is out of the hands of humans and lies solely in genetic makeup. After a 12 year study of adolescent

development by a George Washington University psychiatrist, David Reiss, M.D., he found that parents play a secondary role once genetic influences are accounted for. This would appear that parental influence does not play a role in the decisions that their children make because their destined plan is genetically in place. A further look at Dr. Reiss' study shows that Reiss believes that parents interpret the genetic makeup of their children and can offset much of the genetic influence. The result is very circular in its effect. Dr. Stanley Greenspan, a pediatric psychiatrist at George Washington Medical School, explains how parents' consistent effort can direct their children in developing a self-image. He used the example of an infant whose genetic makeup is withdrawn. Parents can do nothing and allow the infant to withdraw further or they can engage the child with "special enthusiasm" in which Greenspan has found that the infant will change their behavior. (Paul, 1998) Even though many argue that genetic makeup paves the development of a child, the reality of the outcome is based on parental influence.

Teenagers Receive Mixed Messages

Establishing the foundation of parental influence on teenage drinking is an important factor in dealing with the messages that teenagers receive from their parents. Parents are not delivering a zero tolerance message; instead, they are delivering mixed messages based on their attitudes about alcohol. Because alcohol is considered an acceptable societal drug, teenagers are only becoming confused. In a parental survey completed by the Hazelden Foundation in New York, 60 percent of the parents claimed they caution their children not to drink, but then they turn around and "assure them that if they do drink, they will help arrange for their safe transportation home". This does not imply a clear no-use message. The Hazelden poll found that

only 23.1 percent of parents strictly forbid their children to use alcohol. The majority of the population covertly condones their teenagers' drinking. The survey found that 92.2 percent of parents said that they would not allow their children to drink on prom night; however, one third of these parents would still allow their children to attend parties where alcohol is present. ("Parent Survey," 1998) Parents are throwing up their hands assuming that their children are going to drink no matter what, and therefore concede by making arrangements for a safe trip home. The reality of this dilemma is that alcohol contributes to poor decision making and their child may never get to the telephone.

Furthermore, one study showed that 12 percent of drinking teenagers get their alcohol from home. One-third of them are given alcohol by their parents. Thirty percent of teenagers in this study said that the reason they took their first drink was because their parent or guardian offered it to them. Parents have been established as credible role models for children. These statistics contribute to the conclusion that through social learning children are modeling the behavior of their parents. (Colman, 1995)

A normal developmental phase of adolescents is to psychologically emancipate oneself from dependency on the family and develop a unique individual identity. In doing so, teens often seek acceptance from other adolescents and begin to behave in ways that help them to be liked and respected by their peers. The use of alcoholic beverages is often seen as a way to become more "adult" because they have grown up to believe this. (Van Hecke, 1995)

Renee Zito believes that parents are not setting a good example, are not being positive role models, but instead confusing their children about alcohol. She believes

that parents have a role in educating their children to make the right decisions about alcohol by requiring the parents to be responsible drinkers. ("Parent Survey, 1998)

Parental Strategies Have Proven Effective

It has been established that parents are role models, influential, and are giving mixed messages about alcohol consumption. Since parents can influence their children to participate in consuming alcohol they should also be able to influence children, as well, to not participate in the consumption the alcohol. Not all teenagers consume alcohol. There are those who refuse under any circumstance to follow their peers. Studies have shown that parental involvement plays a major role in these teenagers' decision not to drink. These individuals have a strong positive relationship with their parents and have open communication lines.

According to Doug Hall, senior consultant for Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education, "When young people receive a positive, clear no-use message from parents and when that is reinforced in school and in after-school programs, these are profoundly protective factors." ("Positive Data, 1998) Parents need to tell their children that there is no acceptable reason for drinking. Mark A. Van Hecke, in his article Teenagers & Drinking: What Are Parents To Do?, summarizes the importance of parents strongly encouraging their teenagers to not drink. Van Hecke states,

Meaningful change in teenagers' attitudes towards alcohol will only happen if parents insist upon zero tolerance of underage drinking in homes, and abuse in society as a whole. Tough legislation may deter teens from drinking and driving, however, it's up to parents to set good examples for their children by talking openly to them about peer pressure and the consequences of alcohol and substance abuse. (1995)

Summary

Teenage drinking is a growing problem in the United States. Parents can tell their children that alcohol is bad and they should not drink. Continuing to consume alcohol themselves sends a mixed message to their children. There are other parents who condone their teenagers drinking and some will supply them with alcohol. Then there are teenagers who do not cower to peer pressure and abstain from consuming alcohol . This study focused on the level of parental influence in teenage non-drinkers reported by high school teenagers.

Chapter III

Methodology

This section introduces the implementation of the research instrument, the subjects and their selection, the instrumentation of the survey, the procedure followed, and the types of statistical analyses of the data obtained from the instrument. A section of limitations of this study will follow.

Subjects

All of the 84 seniors of the class of 2000 enrolled at the Cumberland High School program in the Cumberland School District located in Cumberland, Wisconsin were identified as the sample for this study. Cumberland School District is a small district located in northwestern Wisconsin with approximately 1200 students K-12. The majority of the students were under the age of 18 and therefore a confidentiality consent form was sent to the subjects' parents. Once the consent forms were delivered by the students, the students were asked to complete the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey. Questionnaires were handed out during the school day and collected immediately after completion. Of the 84 seniors, 68 returned completed or useable surveys.

Instruments

In an effort to gain access to teenagers' views on parental influence on consuming alcohol, the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was created. This self-made survey included three sections (background, parental influences, and various influences). The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey is a self-made evaluation tool originally designed for this research. It was developed after researching data for the review of literature in reference to the levels of parental

influence on teenage alcohol consumption. Questions on the survey are a combination of three types: yes or no, frequencies rating (including options 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often and 5-Almost Always), and rank ordering (1 being most influential and 7 being the least influential). Once the survey was written, Dr. Robert Wurtz (UW-Stout) and Director Chris Ness of the University of Wisconsin-Stout computer processing lab reviewed it for clarity and design. No reliability or validity may be found relating to this survey because it is original to this study.

Procedure

The survey was handed out during English courses and were immediately collected. Each student was asked to take their time and respond to the questions honestly and with the best of their knowledge. The surveying process took approximately 3 days from the day the Human Research Subjects Consent Form was handed out to the collection of the final survey.

Data Analysis

The statistics describe numbers of students who have ever had alcohol, have ever been intoxicated, various parental influences, and rankings of possible other influential factors. Data from the the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey were examined using descriptive statistics to summarize the results. Data were obtained through the use of Frequencies to obtain frequency counts and percentages on the variables of gender and yes or no questions. Frequencies were used to obtain frequency counts, percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation on the variables of age, frequencies ratings and order rankings. Further data were obtained with the use of NPAR Tests Friedman to obtain a Friedman's two-way analysis of

variance by ranks on the ranking section of the the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was also calculated and printed out, but it did not provide any additional information that was already concluded with the NPAR Tests Friedman.

Limitations

Limitations of this study, like most studies, existed. Of the 84 seniors enrolled at Cumberland High School, only 68 completed the survey. The surveys unaccounted for is a reflection of student absences, students enrolled in the cognitive disabled special education classrooms, and students that were unable to complete the survey.

Since this survey was completed by only 68 Cumberland High School seniors the data collected are specific only to this group. In addition, the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was a self-made instrument that did not have any prior testing to make comparisons. These factors may have affected the reliability and validity of the data received.

Further, the survey designated a particular senior class. As most educators would agree, each group of students that goes through the education system varies from year to year. Many of the questions might be answered differently by different class groups of students.

Finally, even though the students were informed that they should answer the survey questions honestly they may still have experienced discomfort with the subject matter. As they are well aware that underage drinking is illegal, the students may have been inhibited to answer honestly in fear that their response may be found out. In addition, their current emotional relationship with their parents would effect their responses to the questions of parental influence.

Chapter IV

Results

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the level of parental influence in teenage non-drinkers reported by high school teenagers. This study focused on the following three objectives to identify the level of parental influence on teenagers that choose to not consume alcohol: to determine the current level of parental influence in teenagers that choose not to consume alcohol; to determine the level of influence of mixed messages experienced by teenagers about consumption of alcohol; to determine the current level of other factors that influence teenagers not to consume alcohol.

Findings

Sixty-eight seniors of the class of 2000 in the Cumberland School District received a survey to voluntarily complete. Students were categorized by gender and age: 39 males, 29 females with an average age of 17.41. The students completed the self-made Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey. The survey was created in three sections including background demographics, frequencies of behavior, and other influential factors. Background data were collected by calculating the frequencies to obtain frequency counts, and percentages. Frequencies on the remaining items was used to obtain frequencies counts, percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation. The NPAR Test Friedman was used to obtain a Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks on other influential factors. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was also calculated, but did not conclude additional information to the Friedman tests.

Demographics

The general background information was collected to obtain demographic information. Information was collected regarding gender, age, experience with alcohol and experience with intoxication. The demographic results are given in Tables 1a-c.

Gender

Each respondent was asked to indicate their gender. Out of the 68 students, 39 (57.4%) were male and 29 (42.6%) were female. (See Table 1a).

Table 1a
Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	57.4
Female	29	42.6
Total	68	100.0

Age

Each respondent was asked to indicate their current age. Out of 68 students one was 16 years old, thirty-nine were 17 years old, twenty-seven were 18 years old, and one was 19 years old.
(See Table 1b).

Table 1b
Age of Respondent

Age	Frequency	Percent
16 years old	1	1.5
17 years old	39	57.4
18 years old	27	39.7
19 years old	1	1.5
Total	68	100.0

Experience With Alcohol

The main basis for this study was focused on the use of alcohol by teenagers. Whether the individuals in this group of students ever consumed an alcoholic beverage needed to be determined. Out of the 68 students surveyed 62 (91.2) responded with a "yes" and 6 (8.8) responded with a "no". (See Table 1c)

Table 1c
Ever Had an Alcoholic Drink

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	62	91.2
No	6	8.8
Total	68	100.0

Experience With Intoxication

The next level from having had an alcoholic drink was intoxication. The students were asked whether they have ever experienced being intoxicated. Out of the 68 students, 47 (69.1%) responded “yes” and 21 (30.9%) responded “no”. (See Table 1d).

Table 1d
Ever Been Intoxicated

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	69.1
No	21	30.9
Total	68	100.0

Frequencies Involving Teenage Alcohol Use

The purpose of the next section of The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was to look at the relationship between alcohol and teens, alcohol and parents, communication between parents and teens about alcohol, and decision making based on parental influence. The results are given in Tables 2a-j.

Drinking on Weekends

In review of the literature research has shown that teenagers drink more on the weekends when they have more time and less of the responsibilities that confine them during the school week. On a scale of 1 to 5 the respondents were asked how often they spend their weekends consuming alcohol. The scale consisted of the following

categorical levels: 1-Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Almost Always. Even though the percentage of students was high for the experiences with alcohol and intoxication (see Table 1c and 1d), 52.9% of the respondents rarely or never drink on the weekends. (See Table 2a).

Table 2a
Ever Drink on Weekends

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	19	27.9
2 Rarely	17	25.0
3 Sometimes	15	22.1
4 Often	11	16.2
5 Almost Always	6	8.8
Total	68	100.0

Parents/Guardians Use Alcohol

In the review of the literature section it was noted that teens often receive mixed messages from their parents/guardians. While the adults may tell the teens that drinking is bad, many adults will display a different message as they partake in drinking alcohol themselves. The results of this survey showed that the largest percent of parents/guardians (47.1%) never or rarely use alcohol. (See Table 2b).

Table 2b
Do Your Parent(s)/Guardian(s) use Alcohol?

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	12	17.6
2 Rarely	20	29.4
3 Sometimes	25	36.8
4 Often	7	10.3
5 Almost Always	4	5.9
Total	68	100.0

Parents Allowing Use

Research has also addressed the issue that alcohol is an acceptable drug which is often condoned by parents. The respondents were asked if their parents would allow them to use alcohol. Out of the 68 students only 9 responded almost always. (See Table 2c on page 20).

Parents Talking to Teens About Not Drinking

Communication between parents and children has been identified as a major factor of parenting. The concern is whether parents are communicating their opinions on not drinking alcohol to their teens at all. Of the 68 students 8 (11.8%) responded that their parents "Never" talk about not drinking, 16(23.5%) responded "Rarely", 23 (33.8) responded "Sometimes", 17 (25.0) responded "Often", and 4 (5.9) responded "Almost Always". (See Table 2d on page 20).

Table 2c
Would Parents Allow You to Use Alcohol?

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	17	25.0
2 Rarely	28	41.2
3 Sometimes	12	17.6
4 Often	2	2.9
5 Almost Always	9	13.2
Total	68	100.0

Table 2d
Have Your Parents Talked About Not Drinking

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	8	11.8
2 Rarely	16	23.5
3 Sometimes	23	33.8
4 Often	17	25.0
5 Almost Always	4	5.9
Total	68	100.0

Following Parental Requests

Even though parents may communicate openly their beliefs on any issue including teenage drinking, their teens may not be listening or choose not to abide. The respondents were asked if they think they are likely to do what their parents say. Of the 68 respondents 48.5% responded they do follow what their parents say. Nineteen (27.9%) responded “often” and 14 (20.6) responded “Almost Always”. Only 7 responded “Rarely”, and 2 responded “Never”. (See table 2e).

Table 2e

You are Likely to do what your Parents Say

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	2	2.9
2 Rarely	7	10.3
3 Sometimes	26	38.2
4 Often	19	27.9
5 Almost Always	14	20.6
Total	68	100.0

Parental Influence

The respondents were then asked if they felt their parents influenced their decisions. Of the 68 students 10 (14.7%) responded “Almost Always”, 19 (27.9%) responded “Often”, 26 (38.2%) responded “Sometimes”, 7 (10.3%) responded “Rarely”, and 6 (8.8%) responded “Never”. (See Table 2f).

Table 2f
Parents are Likely to Influence Your Decisions

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	6	8.8
2 Rarely	7	10.3
3 Sometimes	26	38.2
4 Often	19	27.9
5 Almost Always	10	14.7
Total	68	100.0

Parental Expression Against Drinking

In review of the literature a suggestion that the only way to control teenage drinking is to have a zero tolerance. This zero tolerance must not only be expressed by parents, but also must be applied to them as well as their children. The respondents were next asked whether their parents expressed strong feelings against their children drinking alcohol. The response to this question does not seem consistent with the responses from the rest of the survey. The number of frequencies are closer together across the 1-5 categories. (See Table 2g on page 23).

Honest Communication Between Teens and Parents

All communication in any relationship must be two-way. Therefore, the respondents were asked whether they have been open and honest with their parents about their involvement with alcohol. (See Table 2h on page 23).

Table 2g
Parents Expressed Strong Feelings Against Drinking

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	11	16.2
2 Rarely	13	19.1
3 Sometimes	19	27.9
4 Often	15	22.1
5 Almost Always	10	14.7
Total	68	100.0

Table 2h
Open and Honest W/ Parents About Consume/Not Consume

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	8	11.8
2 Rarely	9	13.2
3 Sometimes	15	22.1
4 Often	14	20.6
5 Almost Always	22	32.4
Total	68	100.0

Feeling Pressure to Not Drink and Pressure to Drink

Research involving teenagers and decision-making often entail the issue of peer pressure. The final elements of the survey questioned the respondents as to whether they felt pressure to drink or not to drink. These two areas were combined because the bulk of the results in both categories resulted in feeling no pressure either way. (See Table 2i below, and Table 2j on page 25).

Table 2i
Feel Pressure to Not Drink

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	24	35.3
2 Rarely	15	22.1
3 Sometimes	13	19.1
4 Often	9	13.2
5 Almost Always	7	10.3
Total	68	100.0

Table 2j
Feel Pressure to Drink Alcohol

	Frequency	Percent
1 Never	29	42.6
2 Rarely	21	30.9
3 Sometimes	13	19.1
4 Often	4	5.9
5 Almost Always	1	1.5
Total	68	100.0

Other Influential Factors

The purpose of the final section of The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was to not rule out other influential factors in addition to parental influence, such as peers, school, television commercials, television shows, movies and other. The survey asked the respondents to rank 7 options in the order of which they would say has had the most influence on their views about teenage drinking. The respondents were to enter 1 for the most influential, 2 for the second most influential, 3 for the third most influential, 4 for the fourth influential, 5 for the fifth influential, 6 for the sixth influential, and 7 for the least influential. Frequencies on the items was used to obtain frequencies counts, percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation. The NPAR Test Friedman was used to obtain a Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks on other influential factors. (See Tables 3a-h on the following pages). The sum of the ranks occurred in an error as 10 surveys were filled out incorrectly in this

section. The totals for each table will apply to only 58 of the 68 surveys. The 10 surveys that resulted in error add up to 14.7% of the total percentage.

Table 3a
Influenced by Parents

	Frequency	Percent
1 Ranked 1st	16	23.5
2 Ranked 2nd	21	30.9
3 Ranked 3rd	10	14.7
4 Ranked 4th	2	2.9
5 Ranked 5th	3	4.4
6 Ranked 6th	2	2.9
7 Ranked 7th	4	5.9
Total	58	100.0

Table 3b
Influenced by Peers

	Frequency	Percent
1 Ranked 1st	29	42.6
2 Ranked 2nd	13	19.1
3 Ranked 3rd	11	16.2
4 Ranked 4th	2	2.9
6 Ranked 6th	2	2.9
7 Ranked 7th	1	1.5
Total	58	85.3

Table 3c
Influenced by Schools

	Frequency	Percent
1 Ranked 1st	3	4.4
2 Ranked 2nd	15	22.1
3 Ranked 3rd	19	27.9
4 Ranked 4th	9	13.2
5 Ranked 5th	3	4.4
6 Ranked 6th	9	13.2
Total	58	85.3

Table 3d
Influenced by Television Commercials

	Frequency	Percent
2 Ranked 2nd	2	2.9
3 Ranked 3rd	3	4.4
4 Ranked 4th	18	26.5
5 Ranked 5th	15	22.1
6 Ranked 6th	13	19.1
7 Ranked 7th	7	12.1
Total	58	85.3

Table 3e
Influenced by Television Shows

	Frequency	Percent
2 Ranked 2nd	4	5.9
3 Ranked 3rd	7	10.3
4 Ranked 4th	13	19.1
5 Ranked 5th	14	20.6
6 Ranked 6th	17	25.0
7 Ranked 7th	3	4.4
Total	58	85.3

Table 3f
Influenced by Movies

	Frequency	Percent
2 Ranked 2nd	3	4.4
3 Ranked 3rd	3	4.4
4 Ranked 4th	10	14.7
5 Ranked 5th	22	32.4
6 Ranked 6th	13	19.1
7 Ranked 7th	7	10.3
Total	58	85.3

Table 3g
Influenced Views: Other

	Frequency	Percent
1 Ranked 1st	10	14.7
3 Ranked 3rd	5	7.4
4 Ranked 4th	4	5.9
5 Ranked 5th	1	1.5
6 Ranked 6th	2	2.9
7 Ranked 7th	36	52.9
Total	58	85.3

Table 3h
Friedman's Two-Way Analysis

	Parents	Peers	School	TV Commercials	TV Shows	Movies	Other
Valid	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Missing	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Mean	2.60	1.98	3.36	4.95	4.72	5.03	5.34
Std. Dev.	1.74	1.36	1.46	1.25	1.33	1.26	2.38

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This descriptive study focused on the following objectives: To determine the current level of parental influence in teenagers that choose not to consume alcohol. To determine the level of influence of mixed messages experienced by teenagers about consumption of alcohol. To determine the current level of other factors that influence teenagers not to consume alcohol. The group study included 68 class of 2000 seniors at Cumberland High School. The hypothesis of this study was that the reason teenagers make the decision to not consume alcohol is caused by the influence from their parent(s)/guardian(s) that are positive role models and abstain from drinking alcohol.

The results of The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey was collected by calculating the frequencies of responses using the Friedman test. According to the results of this survey it can be concluded that most teenagers' decisions are influenced by their parents at least "Sometimes" 38%, or more often. Twenty-seven percent said that their parents influence their decision "often" and 14.7% responded "Almost Always". The cumulative percent of 19.1% reflected those that responded "Rarely" or "Never" being influenced by their parents.

The frequency use of alcohol by the parents coincides with the frequency use of alcohol by teenagers on weekends. Eleven of the 68 responded that their parents drink "Often" or "Almost Always" totally a cumulative 16.2%. In comparison to teenagers that drink on weekends, the number of students grew to 17 of the 68 (25%). The cumulative percent of parents that use alcohol "Sometimes", "Rarely", or "Never" is 83.8%. The cumulative percent for students that responded "Sometimes", "Rarely", or "Never" for drinking on weekends was not as high as the previous percent, but at 75%.

In review of the literature it was suggested that parents need to have a zero tolerance for their teenagers consuming alcohol. Only 25% of the students responded that their parents would “Never” allow them to use alcohol. The remaining 75% have allowed their teenagers to drink alcohol from a minimum of “Rarely” (41.2%) to “Almost Always” (13.2%)

The two-way message of communication between parents and their teenagers about alcohol must take place. Of the 68 students, 23 (33.8%) responded that their parents have talked about not drinking, 17 (25.0%) “Often” and 4 (5.9%) “Almost Always”.

When the level of discussion included strong beliefs about drinking, the formation of the frequencies change somewhat from the previous question: “Never” 11(16.2%); “Rarely” 13 (19.1%); “Sometime” 19 (27.9%); “Often” 15 (22.1%); “Almost Always” 10 (14.7%)

Surprisingly, a cumulative percent of 75% of teens are open and honest about their use or non-use as the respondents chose “Sometimes” (22.1%); “Often” (20.6%) or “Almost Always” (32.4%).

The section on pressure to drink or not to drink reflected that students do not feel pressure either way. When asked if they feel pressure not to drink, 35.3% responded “Never”. The percents became greater when asked if they feel pressure to drink, 42.6% responded “Never”.

Since this descriptive study was to examine the level of parental influence on teenagers that do not drink, other factors needed to be addressed. The students were asked to rank 7 influential options (parents, peers, school, television commercials, television shows, movies, other) in the order of which they would say has had the most influence on their views about teenage drinking. The respondents were to enter 1 for the most influential, 2 for the second most influential, 3 for the third most influential,

4 for the fourth influential, 5 for the fifth influential, 6 for the sixth influential, and 7 for the least influential. Frequencies on the items was used to obtain frequencies counts, percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation. The NPAR Test Friedman was used to obtain a Friedman's two-way analysis of variance by ranks on other influential factors. (See Tables 3a-h) The sum of the ranks occurred in an error as 10 surveys were filled out incorrectly in this section of the survey; therefore, affecting the total from 68 to 58.

When looking at parental influence, a cumulative percent of 81.0% ranked parental influence as 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. (See Table 3a). Peer influence, however, was ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd with a cumulative percent of 91.4% which surpasses the parental influence factor. (See Table 3b). Other elements that were ranked were school, television commercials, television shows, and movies. The students had the option to mention others. (See Table 3c-g).

The mean rank for peer influence is 1.98 with a standard deviation of 1.36, which is a significant difference in average rank for parental influence which has a mean rank of 2.60 with a standard deviation of 1.74. Ranked 3rd most often was the school with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.46. Ranked 4th was television shows with a mean of 4.72 and standard deviation of 1.33. Ranked 5th was television commercials, 6th was movies and 7th was the category of other. (See Table 3h).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to focus on the following three objectives to identify the level of parental influence on teenagers that choose to not consume alcohol: To determine the current level of parental influence in teenagers that choose

not to consume alcohol; to determine the level of influence of mixed messages experienced by teenagers about consumption of alcohol; to determine the current level of other factors that influence teenagers not to consume alcohol.

To Determine the Current Level of Parental Influence

Previously stated in the Literature Review section the results of a survey stated that 61 percent of teenagers said that their parents contribute the most influence on their decision to drink alcohol or not. (Dolliver, 1998) According to the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking survey 38.2% responded that they “Sometimes” feel their parent is likely to influence their decision making, 27.9% responded “Often” and 14.7% responded “Always”, a cumulative percent of 80.8%. This seems to be a large percentage that think their parents are influential in their decision making. When looking back at how many parents would allow their teens to use alcohol, a cumulative percent of 66.2% responded “Rarely” (41.2%) and “Never” (25%). In addition, in the ranking section of the survey a cumulative percent of 81.0% ranked parental influence as 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. (See Table 3a). An assumption from the results of these two questions would be that parents have a high level of influence on their teenagers’ drinking habits.

To Determine the Level of Influence of Mixed Messages

As stated in the Literature Review , alcohol is considered an acceptable societal drug which only adds to the confusion of teenagers. In a parental survey completed by the Hazelden Foundation in New York, 60 percent of the parents claimed they caution their children not to drink, but then turn around and tell their teens that if they do make the mistake of drinking .

that they will be there to protect them. ("Parent Survey", 1998) The results from the Hazelden poll coincide with the cumulative percent of 64.7% that responded in the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking survey that their parents talk to them about not drinking "Sometimes" (33.8%), "Often" (25%), and "Almost Always" (5.9%). The Hazelden poll also found that only 23.1 percent of parents strictly forbid their children to use alcohol. This too coincides with the Various Influences of Teenage Drinking results that 25% of parents would "Never" allow their teenagers to use alcohol. The conclusion that parents are sending mixed message comes into play when an astounding majority of parents would prefer that their children not drink and drive, but do not seem to be concerned just about the drinking. Unless parents establish a zero tolerance for teenage drinking by being positive role models and abstaining from drinking themselves, saying "No", will not mean "No!"

Determine the Current Level of Other Factors that Influence

The main focus of the survey was geared toward the connection of parents and their teenagers. Part three of the survey took into consideration that other aspects might be more influential than parents. The outcome showed that the only factor that played a stronger influential role according to ranks was peer influence. Parents came in a close second. This section of the survey can be questioned as the results show that clearly a larger percentage listen and learn from their parents as seen in Table 2e and 2f. The majority of the students also responded that they do not feel pressure to drink or not to drink as seen in Table 2i and 2j. It is this researchers conclusion that "peer pressure" has been used so often as a scapegoat in society and therefore becoming an automatic response. Addressing parental influence is often seen as taboo because society does not want to blame the parents and therefore looks to find other outlets which is too often peer pressure.

The only other factors that were ranked first were school and other influences. Three of the 68 students ranked “school” as having the most influence on their views about teenage drinking. Twelve of the 68 students ranked “Other” as having the most influence on their views about teenage drinking. Table 3g reflects 10 out of 68, but 2 of the twelve surveys were not included in the calculation because the students did not fill them out correctly. Nine of the surveys that responded “Other” explained that they themselves were the most influential on their views about teenage drinking. One said it was “curiosity” and another responded that the most influence on their views about teenage drinking was “religious beliefs”.

Although this study was to focus on the influences of teenagers that choose not to drink, both sides had to be looked at. The results of this study show a strong leaning that parents play an important role in the decisions that their teens make. When the students were asked if their parents use alcohol, a cumulative percentage of 83.8% responded “Sometime”(36,8%), “Rarely” (29.4%) or “Never” (17.6%). The result of this question seems to coincide with what teens do with their free time. When asked if they ever drink on weekends a cumulative percentage of 75% responded “Sometime” (22.1%), “Rarely” (25%), “Never” (27.9%). Teens see their parents engaged in other activities other than consuming alcohol and therefore the majority of them choose to do the same. The findings seem to show that parents that have open communication with their feelings about their teens drinking and are positive role models in not drinking themselves seem to have less of a problem.

Recommendations

Parents are playing an influential role in the lives of their children. Some parents are positive role models while others are sadly negative role models.

Teenagers are not often willing to admit that they are influenced by their parents, but the bottom line is that humans learn from their environment. The original hypothesis of this study was that the reason teenagers make the decision to not consume alcohol is caused by the influence from their parent(s)/guardian(s) that are positive role models and abstain from drinking alcohol. This is only somewhat true and sometimes results in just the opposite. If parents choose to be submissive when it comes to their teens and drinking alcohol, the chances increase that their teens will at one time, or more often, be involved with this governed drug. On the other hand, if parents persist in being positive role models by drinking moderately, or never at all, their teens have a greater chance of lessening their involvement with alcohol.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. This study was limited to a small rural high school. This study could be expanded to a larger school with more students in the graduating class.
2. Since Part Three of the survey resulted in a significant difference in Mean Rank ranking peers influence higher than parents, more questions would be needed to be added to the survey addressing peer influence.
3. The Various Influences of Teenage Drinking survey was original and was only applied this one time. To check reliability or validity the survey would need to be applied to more groups of students.
4. The survey could address two different groups of people: the students and their parents.
5. The survey could be given to a wider range of students, possibly all high school students.

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Appendix

Various Influences of Teenage Drinking Survey

Part One: Background Information

Gender: Male_____ Female_____

Age:_____

Part Two:

1. Have you ever had an alcoholic beverage?

Yes_____ No_____

2. Have you ever been intoxicated?

Yes_____ No_____

3. Do you drink on a weekends?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

4. Do your parent(s)/guardian(s) use alcohol?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

5. Would your parent(s)/guardian(s) allow you to use alcohol?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

6. Have your parent(s)/guardian(s) talked to you about not drinking?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

7. **Do you feel you are likely to do what your parent(s)/guardian(s) say?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

8. **Do you feel your parent(s)/guardian(s) are likely to influence your decisions?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

9. **Have your parent(s)/guardian(s) expressed strong feelings against you drinking?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

10. **Have you been open and honest with your parent(s)/guardian(s) about your decision to consume or not to consume alcohol?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

11. **Do you feel pressure to not drink?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

12. **Do you feel pressure to drink alcohol?**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

13. Which of the following would you say has had the most influence on your views about teenage drinking:

Rank the following 1 - 7. Enter 1 for the most influential, 2 for the second most influential, 3 for the third most influential, 4 for the fourth influential, 5 for the fifth influential, 6 for the sixth influential, and 7 for the least influential.

- _____ Parents
- _____ Peers
- _____ School
- _____ Television commercials
- _____ Television shows
- _____ Movies
- _____ Other (explain) _____